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DRAMA

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Number 15



REPRODUCTION OF THE DESIGN
ON THE PROGRAMME OF THE
GALA PERFORMANCE OF THE
MOLIÈRE TERCENTARY CELEBRA-
TION IN PARIS

Issued by the BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE, a Federation of Societies and other Organizations working for the Development of the Drama. Individual Membership is also open to all who are concerned with the practice or enjoyment of the Art of the Theatre, and may be acquired by payment of the Annual Subscription of £1 1s., entitling the Member to all privileges of the League, including the free receipt of the League's Monthly Magazine. Full particulars from the Hon. Sec.
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PROGRAMME

THE LOVER AND THE DEAD WOMAN: By L. Stanley Jast

ST. SIMEON STYLITES: By F. Sladen-Smith

HARBOUR: By L. Stanley Jast

FATHER NOAH: By Geoffrey Whitworth

THE APOTHEOSIS OF MOLIERE

By Cloudesley Brereton

For nearly a week Paris gave itself up, in spite of the political crisis, to celebrating the tercentenary of Molière. The Comédie Française, the Department of Fine Arts, the Ministry of Public Instruction, and the Foreign Office all participated in the festival. Over forty States, great and small, had been asked to send delegates. Great Britain had three: Mr. Laurence Binyon, of the British Museum; Mr. Cloudesley Brereton, who also represented the British Drama League; and Mr. A. B. Walkley, dramatic critic of *The Times*. Even recent enemies, like Austria, had their delegates, so had China and Japan, while among the smaller Governments figured Esthonia, Georgia, and Salvador. Practically all the States of South America sent their contingents, down to Paraguay and Venezuela.

Education was especially represented at the Sorbonne and at the theatrical performances, to which not only professors but selected pupils from the schools were invited. Another predominantly scholastic function was the reception at Molière's old school, the ancient Collège de Clermont, which became even in his lifetime the Lycée Louis le Grand. The programme included a performance by the pupils of "*Le Malade Imaginaire*," and a visit of inspection, restricted to the delegates, under the guidance of the headmaster, through those parts of the Collège which have remained more or less unaltered since Molière's schooldays. Though, in Molière's day, it occupied only half the space of the present buildings, it contained over 2,000 scholars. About 200 were boarders and paid very high fees, but the day-boys were admitted free on the results of an examination, the Jesuit fathers very wisely not refusing admission to a promising pupil, however humble his circumstances. The waiting list was therefore a long one.

Molière's record at the school, though he did not win any of the magnificent prizes of the day, was a good one. He reached the top class in five years, and doubtless it was here that he learnt to know and love Lucretius, who had such an influence on his outlook of life, and whom he translated possibly while at school. One may fancy his amazing ability in the poetical art was

largely developed by the early essay in translation into French, as the only verse the pupils indulged in with rare exceptions was Greek or Latin, though practice in these also helped Molière to attain that remarkable concinnity that distinguishes his verse. The visit to the class-rooms revealed nothing particularly antique about them, except that one of the delegates suggested the atmosphere was possibly coeval with the time of Molière. More interesting were the details about the original building, which faced on a street about "two carriages wide" and down which in wet weather ran a stream, in which no doubt the collegians ducked one another. One wonders how the 2,000 pupils ever got through the narrow school gate on a wet day. But, once inside, the discipline and teaching seem to have been admirable. Though many of the classes were of over one hundred, they were divided into companies of ten (*decuriones*) and the pupils were all classified, from the *primus* down to the *decimus*. Not only the *primus*, but all were responsible for the home-work and preparation of their squad. These interesting details and many more were given in a very able lecture by one of the staff.

One cannot pass over in a line the visit made by the delegates to the exhibition of the "relics" of Molière at the Comédie Française. At the end of this pious pilgrimage wreaths were placed at the foot of Houdin's bust by the chief of the Jugo-Slav delegation in the name of his countrymen and by the English delegate in the name of the British Drama League. The latter wreath bore the inscription: "A Molière—génie français et universel."

One can only say a few words on the incomparable theatrical performances given by actors on their mettle before excited and enthusiastic audiences. They were unforgettable and one is constrained to ask if it is not possible for the Comédie Française to come to England and give at least one performance on similar lines?

M. de Feraudy as M. Jourdain and M. Georges Berr as the Maître de philosophie, were admirable, and M. Croué made a quite remarkable valet as Covielle. The women, Madame Jourdain and Nicole la servante, though extraordinarily good, struck one a

a shade too shrewdish, especially the latter, and the same slight reserve might be made on the otherwise delightful impersonation of Dorine in "Tartuffe" at the Français. Madame Granier, who took the same part in the selections from "Tartuffe" when given at the Opéra, had only half a dozen sentences to say, but in those half a dozen she fulfilled one's conception of the servant whose residence for some years with the family had given her certain standing, and who freely takes part in the conversations at table as all French servants in middle class families used to do, while none the less careful to keep their place. Can it be that the French servants no longer join in the conversation of their masters and so this domestic tradition is being lost?

The acting of M. Silvain as Tartuffe, with its perpetual light and shade, was a masterpiece and made the other Tartuffe at the Opéra seem a little monotonous. Of the two exponents of that most difficult rôle, Elmire, Madame Sorel excelled by striking at the outset the note of placidity the one absolutely necessary to render the character intelligible and thereby affording an excellent foil to that very difficult character Orgon, whose most convincing exponent was M. Signoret at the Opéra. M. Léon Bernard as M. de Pourceaugnac, had quite a touch of Coquelin Aîné, and he dominated the scene, while in the minor part of the Limousine Madame Silvain was superb. As for that most marvellous of actors, M. Guitry, what with the sureness of his gestures and his impeccable diction, he, as Alceste, simply outshone his fellow actors, fine as they were. Mention too must be made of the beautiful little interlude where Lafontaine (Guitry fils) and Le Rossignol (Ivon Printemps) discussed the death of Molière. Ivon Printemps revealed herself as a veritable nightingale. Her clear unforced singing filled the Opera, vast as it is, and fairly brought down the house.

Not the least attraction of these unique performances was that the "Bourgeois Gentilhomme" and "M. de Pourceaugnac" were played as at the time of Molière with the full ballet and the music of Lully, the ballet having to be specially engaged and trained for this occasion. It set the two plays in an entirely new perspective and the skilful way in which the comedy passed into riotous

farce made one cease to regret with Boileau the high-spirited horseplay of Molière. Actually it would be an eye-opener to many foreign armchair critics of Molière, who, unlike their French *confrères*, are apt to judge all dramatic work as if it were written for the closet. Happily the French have never made this divorce between the stage and literature, so that their stage has always a strong literary flavour and their literature a strong sense of the dramatic. In conclusion, mention must be made of the *finale* at the Comédie, in which the whole household of Molière took part, and which was composed of a *défilé* of actors in the costumes of the chief rôles of his principal plays.

The *finale* at the Opéra was equally impressive. It consisted of the last scene of the "Malade Imaginaire," in which the principal Paris actors, not connected with the Comédie took part, either dressed as doctors or in costumes of characters they had created. And when the celebrated speech was reached, the point at which Molière was seized with the fatal spasm that caused his death two hours later, the crowd of actors on the stage and the vast audience rose to their feet at the bidding of the leader and remained standing for a few moments in silent homage to the great dramatist. One felt at that moment that strong sense of communication between the living and the dead that lies very deep in every Frenchman's heart.

THE VALUE OF THE AMATEUR.

That amateur acting can become something more than a pleasant pastime for winter evenings, is being very plainly proved at the Balham Settlement, where a keenly enthusiastic dramatic section has been steadily at work for the last fifteen months under the aegis of the British Drama League.

Expert tuition has been provided in such important departments of stage technique as breath-management, voice production, diction and miming, while quite an ambitious series of dramatic works have been rehearsed. These have included a considerable number of Shakespearian scenes, and modern plays by such distinguished authors as Pinero, J. M. Barrie, Stanley Houghton, J. M. Synge, Harold Chapin, Granville Barker and Laurence Housman.

As a conclusion to the autumn session, a two days' examination has been held at which such distinguished authorities as Mr. Lee Mathews, of the British Drama League, and Miss Elsie Fogerty, of the Central School of Speech Training and Dramatic Art, adjudicated upon the performances.

In reviewing the first evening's work, which included the Trial Scene from "The Merchant of Venice," "The Dear Departed," by Stanley Houghton, and "Riders to the Sea," by J. M. Synge, Mr. Lee Mathews said that the members were doing very fine work, not only for British drama, but for themselves, in studying the technique of dramatic art with such energy and enthusiasm. The work was not merely worth while for its own sake, but as a preparation for a career in any walk of life. To learn how to speak properly, move without awkwardness, and to acquire self-confidence, were of inestimable value to everyone. If he were interviewing applicants for any important position, he would ask as his first question, "Have you ever done any acting?"

Mr. Mathews dealt with the performance in some detail, paying particular compliments to the costumes, settings and lighting effects which had all been devised by the members themselves.

On the second evening, before Miss Elsie Fogerty, two further scenes from "The Merchant of Venice" were rendered, as well as Harold Chapin's "Augustus in Search of a Father," "Riders to the Sea," and the comedy by Sir A. W. Pinero, "Playgoers." The whole performance, said Miss Fogerty, was an excellent example of team work, in which all were co-operating towards a very excellent result. She praised the versatility of members who appeared during the evening in widely different characters, and the performance of many of the smaller parts won her particular commendation.

To Mrs. Errock, under whose skilled direction such remarkable results had been achieved, and to all the members of the Balham Settlement Dramatic Section, the very highest praise was due, and she hoped that they would be able successfully to defend the challenge cup which she had the honour to award them earlier in the year.

THE PRIVATE PLAY.

Though January brought to London not so very much of importance in the way of professional theatre work, it was possible to witness in other quarters some dramatic production of quite unusual quality.

Two one-act plays, "Galahad Green," by Clifford Bax, and "Barriers," by Harold Rubinstein, were given in a Kensington Studio with a delightful simplicity. The studio electric-light, switched off and then on again, disclosing the characters in position, formed a perfectly suitable "curtain," and the plays and acting were just as perfectly suited to the surroundings. One wanted nothing more.

Then, in Montagu Square, a big first floor drawing-room was transformed into a veritable Little Theatre, for a children's play written by Mr. Archibald Probert, author of that monumental book on the Russian Ballet; and the scenery, painted by Mr. Malcolm Milne, provided a whimsical background for the lively performance of a company of lively children. Less elaborate but equally "finished" from the scenic point of view, were two plays by Mrs. Mayor, again acted by children in a house on Campden Hill. The children, most of them of very tender years, took the parts of grown-up people, giving a fantastic effect as of a company of automatic marionettes.

But the most ambitious, and in some ways the most remarkable of these private productions, was that given by the choristers of All Saints, Margeret Street, on three successive evenings in the Church Room, converted for the occasion into a very novel playhouse. The audience was seated in two rows set on either side of the long room. The play was enacted in this central space and also at the further end of the room where a scene had been built up. The play was "The Taming of the Shrew," acted entirely by the boys of the school, with only one adult—the Precentor—to help them as Petruchio. The acting was wonderfully good, and in two cases reached a level which could hardly have been surpassed by the boy actors of Shakespeare's own day. I have never seen a finer Katherine, nor, as a whole, and judged by whatever standard you please, a more suggestive and original performance.

G. A. W.



THE JOURNAL OF
THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE

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Neither the Editor nor the Drama League as a whole accepts any responsibility for the opinions expressed in signed articles printed in this Journal

We are glad to report that the Gilbert and Sullivan Ball held at the Savoy Hotel on January 5th, in aid of the funds of the League, was a great success. It resulted in a net profit to the League of £430 and was even more widely attended than the Beggar's Opera Ball held last year. The success of the ball was due to the splendid efforts of the large committee which worked it, and especially to the Organiser, Mrs. Elisabeth Fagan, assisted by Mrs. Geoffrey Whitworth. It should be remembered, however, that this fine result is not in itself sufficient to place the League in a sound financial position and no effort should be spared to increase its membership. On the basis of increased membership alone can the League hope to find itself self-supporting.

We have pleasure in printing on another page an account of the Molière Tercentenary written by Mr. Cloudesley Brereton who officially represented the League at the celebrations. Due justice was done to the Tercentenary in the English Press, but we could wish that there could have been a worthier Molière performance given in London. There are several reports of such performances from the provinces, notably at Norwich where Mr. Nugent Monck produced "The Affected Ladies" and "The Mock Doctor."

The growth in the number of societies affiliated to the League and the fact that they are daily making greater and greater use of such facilities as the loan of plays from the League's library has resulted in a considerable stress on the resources of our office. It is becoming increasingly difficult to deal with the number of applications for advice, and also the package of parcels is becoming a heavy item in the day's work. With a view to relieving this stress Miss Winifred Jones is kindly assisting us, and her help is available on Mondays and Thursdays in each week. Will members please note that plays will in future only be despatched from the office on those days, so that it would be well if due notice could be given when any play is required so as to avoid disappointment in the case of copies needed immediately for rehearsal or performance.



As above stated, the membership of the League has increased very satisfactorily during the past few months. Since the beginning of the year thirty-four new members have joined of which ten are societies as set forth below:

- The Burfield Amateur Dramatic Society
 - Miss D. C. Moore.
- Buxton Branch
 - Mrs. Amy Fullaway.
- City of London College
 - Fred Charles, Esq.
- Dumfries Playhouse Dramatic Section
 - Miss E. R. McCreadie.
- Imperial College Musical and Dramatic Society
 - G. R. Roberts, Esq.
- Liverpool Playgoers' Society
 - R. Mason, Esq.
- Mexborough and District Amateur Dramatic Society
 - Horace Flather, Esq.
- Middlesex County Federation of Women's Institutes
 - Mrs. Sylvester.
- Players' Group, People's League of Arts
 - R. H. Weller, Esq.
- Royal Academy of Dramatic Art
 - Kenneth R. Barnes, Esq.
- Scarborough Playgoers
 - Malcolm Rowntree, Esq.
- Wigan and District Dramatic Society
 - F. C. Fairclough, Esq.
 - Mrs. L. Franklin.
- Workers' Educational Association (Manchester and Salford Branch) Dramatic Society
 - H. G. Walker, Esq.
- Hull Shakespeare and Playgoers' Society
 - Miss Ruby Pickles.
- Great Waltham Players
 - Miss L. Franklin.

THE ENGLISH COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Reviewed by Elsie Fogerty

The report of the Departmental Committee on English teaching contains a series of recommendations dealing with the Drama. They deal first with the use of dramatic methods in school teaching, then with the importance of Training College work in speech training and in acting—a point which the Drama League has urged on the T.C. Association during the last two years; finally with the possibility of linking up serious dramatic training with the other activities of the University, through some form of diploma, or through a readership in the Art of the Theatre on the lines of that already established at Liverpool.

Special attention is given to the memorandum of the Drama League presented to the Board of Education on Study in Dramatic method in Training Colleges, and in particular, to the recommendation of training in voice and diction and practical dramatic work in relation to the literary curriculum, with all of which the Committee express themselves in hearty agreement.

The value of play-writing as a form of English composition; the dramatic method in history, are included in a most admirable section, "The Drama as an Educational Activity."

The complete breach between dramatic art in England and education in all its forms from the middle of the seventeenth to the closing years of the nineteenth century is mentioned at the beginning of this section, and it precedes a full and arresting account of what is really a splendid record of modern work, including the performance of scenes or pieces as part of the actual class work in schools, the public performance of plays by pupils, and the visits of pupils to professional performances of suitable plays.

The results which may be looked for from these various activities are of two kinds; firstly, the effect on the mass of the young people of the day:

"The children who take part in performances of plays must learn to speak well and to move well, to appreciate character, and to express emotion becomingly, to be expansive yet restrained, to subordinate the individual to the whole and to play the game, to be resourceful and self-possessed, and to overcome or mitigate personal

dissabilities. Ability to do something is the first ingredient in self-respect."

It is a large claim but if anything it understates the case from the point of view of the general training of English children.

But the report also touches on the opportunity which the breaking down of barriers between the stage and education will give to the young professional student of acting. The final object we must have in view here is that a natural vocation for drama or for acting should have as good a chance of natural development as a gift for music or for design. In promoting co-operation between the stage and the municipal authorities for the formation of municipal repertory companies the report suggests that the British Drama League might well find one of its most fruitful activities. The artist has a right to the opportunity he asks for to serve the world. So far in modern England the dramatic artist has been denied that opportunity except at a cost often ruinous to health and happiness. One lays down this report with a sense of relief in realising how far we have already travelled along the road to a genuine reformation of this unhappy state of things.

Distrust and misunderstanding still exist; the two great forces of education, the theatre and the class-room, still hurl quaint accusations at one another, and still fail to see how they each need the other to achieve a living revival of beauty and significance; but the barriers are falling, and this report marks so great an advance that one waits half expectant for the first signs of actual achievement.

Perhaps the stage for the moment lags a little behind, and some action to make training and selection a genuine doorway to admission for the stage would be its best and most helpful contribution to the march of events.

Even if this proves impossible, there can be no dearth in the future of the trained talent needed for the development of Dramatic Art among us, and the audiences whom we are preparing in the boys and girls of to-day for the theatre of to-morrow should alone suffice to ensure the growth of a high standard of excellence in every direction among its performers.

NEWS FROM NORTH & SOUTH

THE MARLOWE SOCIETY.

The Marlowe Society are performing Shakespeare's "Troilus and Cressida," in the A.D.C. Theatre, Park Street, Cambridge, at 8.15 on Saturday, March 4th; Monday, 6th; Tuesday, 7th; Wednesday, 8th; Thursday, 9th; Friday, 10th; and Saturday, 11th; also at 2.15 on Wednesday, 8th.

Special interest attaches to this production, as the play, though performed recently at Prague, has scarcely ever of recent years been produced in England. The entire production including scenery and dresses is as usual being arranged by members of the Society.

All communications should be addressed S. Perowne, Esq., Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

THE COTSWOLD PLAYERS. A VISIT TO LONDON.

Still happy in their oft-repeated presentations of the drama among the villages amid the Cotswold Hills, the Cotswold Players have already several quite ambitious achievements to their credit. Their itinerary has included Stratford, Bristol, Gloucester, and Oxfordshire, and in their approaching tour they will appear in London. On February 23rd they will present "The Tragedy of Nan," by John Masefield (the President of the Cotswold Players), at King George's Hall, Tottenham Court Road, at a matinee and evening performance, under the auspices of the Gloucestershire Society in London. The rural comedy, "The Wooing of Wundle," will also be given. Both plays are written in dialect and present different aspects of Gloucestershire life.

On the two following days the Players will visit Harpenden, and will present there a series of shorter plays.

NORTH LONDON GROUP.

On Saturday, January 21st, at the Northern Polytechnic, Holloway, before a large and appreciative audience, the North London group gave a performance of "The Wandering Jew," by Temple Thurston. The play was produced by Mr. Walter Lockwood, who must have devoted much time

and thought to it. The title rôle was excellently rendered by Mr. Frederic Tomlin, who showed distinct dramatic power, but perhaps was at his best in the quieter passages of the last phase. Mr. Lockwood, as the Inquisitor General, Mr. J. Granville Mason as Andrea Michelotti, Miss Alice Noble as Judith, Miss Elsie Manley as Olalla, and Miss Kathleen Wills as Maria Zapportas, did specially good work. Miss Rosemary Ede as Joanne de Beaudricourt, was good in her strong moments, but was inclined to sing her quieter lines—a tendency this with most of the women. The costumes were made by the members of the group, who are most heartily to be congratulated on the time, thought, care and enthusiasm they have devoted to the arranging of this performance, which have been rewarded by such good results.

SUDBURY.

The Sudbury Dramatic Society has been in existence just over two years, but they have been extremely successful with the plays they have chosen. Last year "Brer Rabbit" was given. This year another of Mrs. Mabel Dearmer's works, to the musical composition of Mr. Martin Shaw, whose understanding of the authoress's imaginative writing inspires some of his finest efforts, was chosen, and the presentation bids fair to outvie that of "Brer Rabbit." "The Cockyolly Bird" was first placed before the public in 1914, at the Little and the Court Theatres in London, and subsequently it had a good run at Birmingham. The task which the Sudbury Dramatic Society essayed was no light one, but hard work and constant practice, under the supervision of Mr. and Mrs. Sydney W. G. Swan, and the enthusiastic co-operation of all, resulted in an exceedingly pretty production.

The play from start to finish went with a swing, which showed how interested the performers themselves were in their work. The piece was well staged, and the scenery used in the Birmingham production, though large for the stage at the Victoria Hall, Sudbury, the home of the Dramatic Society, was available, and added to the effect. The costumes, too, were in keeping, no effort being spared to make the "Cockyolly Bird" worthy of the authoress and the composer.

LANCASTER.

The Lancaster Footlights Club was founded in May, 1920, with a membership of 67 which has now increased to over 300. Play Readings are held monthly, and in February last the club gave performances of a Triple Bill, comprising "The Monkey's Paw," "The Bishop's Candlesticks," and "Postal Orders." In November, 1920, they produced "Jeanne d'Arc," an historical play written by their Chairman, Rev. J. H. Hastings, and Sir J. M. Barrie's "Quality Street." Both plays were entirely successful, both from an artistic and a financial point of view, and have aroused very considerable public interest in the Club and its doings.

LANCASHIRE CATHOLIC PLAYERS.

Francis d'Assisi (1182-1226) was a Saint, that is to say a man who practised virtue to the heroic degree and especially Charity which he extended not only to his fellow men but to Brother Ass and Brother Wolf and all other animals. Many legends of him survive, one of which relates that a wolf in his cold toothless age repented of his crimes against the people of Gubbio and on Christmas Eve was converted to Love by St. Francis, who alone in Italy was a man without wolfish appetites and passions. This legend has been made into a play by Miss Josephine Preston Peabody in America—a beautiful play at once poetical, allegorical and homilectic—a joy to read in solitude or in a reading circle, but a nightmare to a producer desiring to present it on a stage. The Lancashire Catholic Players, however, with only one qualification, that of reverent sincerity, recently essayed the task which might well baffle the full equipment of a State Opera House. The large audiences accepted the earnest attempt and the inevitable failure with due reverence. Mr. Delahunty, with a fine wolfish voice and a wolf's head over his brows, even drew sympathy and pity from the spectators, and Mr. Fyans as St. Francis, by his very simplicity, achieved a success which might have been denied to greater art. The enormous cast of unessential characters confused the moral and obscured the plot, but the miracle was that these daring players did attain a measure of sublimity.

EPPING.

In aid of the Epping Girl Guides an entertainment composed of English folk songs and plays was given in the Church Room recently. Very properly the hall was full.

In "King George and the Turkish Knight," the audience was treated to the production, in an original manner, of a folk play which had not been performed for some 35 years. Miss Horn has placed the people of Epping under a heavy debt of gratitude in regard both to the programme as a whole and to her individual achievement as Ambrose Comfort. In her foreword Miss Horn gave a short, but lucid, account of the background of English music and dramatic art in such folk-songs and folk-plays as later in the evening were so finely presented.

SHIREHAMPTON AND AVONMOUTH.

The Shirehampton and Avonmouth Branch of the Drama League gave a performance at the Parish Hall on December 7th. The programme consisted of "The Twelve Pound Look," by Barrie; a scene from "Cranford," "The Dear Departed," by Stanley Houghton, the cast comprising in all thirteen members of the Society. The hall, which seats between two and three hundred, was full and the audience were most appreciative. We feel that we have made a good beginning, as it was our first public performance and went well throughout.

The actors had put in much hard work at rehearsals and succeeded in eliminating some of the usual faults of amateurs. There was no prompting or hesitation and all spoke the lines with confidence and care. We had been afraid "The Twelve Pound Look" might be too subtle for our audience, or perhaps rather that it might be beyond our powers to make the points—but the actors are much to be congratulated that such was not the case, and nothing was missed.

We were able to borrow some charming dresses for "Cranford," which took wonderfully well—and "The Dear Departed," which must appeal to any audience, made a roaring finish.

Our membership is small, but our members are keen, and though we have many difficulties to overcome, we mean to get strength in the overcoming.

AUTHORS' FEES

A plea for the Royalty system, and a practical suggestion.

We make no apology for returning to the question of author's fees for amateur production—a question which, indeed, correspondents from all over the country seldom allow us to forget for more than two days together.

Here is a typical extract from a letter sent to us by the secretary of a well-known Acting Society in the North of England:—

"... I should be grateful if you will tell me if it is possible to obtain concessions from authors as regards fees. You will see by the enclosed circular that we are working on Little Theatre lines. Our hall only seats about 220 people and £5 5s. which is demanded both for — and — means producing the play at a loss."

The British Drama League stands for the rights and the interests of Dramatists no less than that of Amateur Societies, and we hold most strongly that an author rightly claims at least as great a consideration in the matter of payment as is demanded by the man who provides any other item of necessity for the production of a play. In espousing the cause of such Societies as that responsible for the above letter, we act from a sense of business quite as much as from a desire to assist the amateur movement.

It is obvious that unless the new conditions of amateur production are recognized, certain plays will be barred from production by an increasing number of Societies. It is our intention to draw up a list of the Societies who are working in according with the laws of the Mansfield House Settlement Dramatic Society, which is reprinted on this page.

Mr. Bernard Shaw, and other leading dramatists, have already consented to allow royalty-payment on receipts, rather than the customary fee, for productions of their plays by Societies which are conducted on similar lines.

We should like to see a list of dramatists who would be willing, in the case of such duly accredited Societies, to follow Mr. Shaw's public-spirited and reasonable deal.

The following is the "Constitution" adopted by the Mansfield House Players, and it defines their movement in accordance with the basis required by Mr. Bernard Shaw if payment by Royalty rather than by the usual Amateur Fee is to be accepted.

Resolutions Constituting the Basis of the Mansfield House Players.

- (1) To form themselves into a body to be called The Mansfield House Players for the purpose of producing a series of plays every season in Mansfield Hall or in any hall or theatre that may become available.
- (2) To devote the profits of the performance given to the building up of a capital fund to be used for the furtherance of dramatic work in West Ham, with the object of securing ultimately a Municipal Theatre.
- (3) To appoint the following officers:— Director, Producer, Stage Manager and a Committee of three (one of whom for the first year shall be a member of the Mansfield House Dramatic Society) to whom the management of the Mansfield House Players shall be entrusted.
- (4) To restrict full membership for the first year to those present at the meeting and such persons as may be co-opted by the Committee. The question of membership to be discussed again in twelve months' time.
- (5) Business meetings, to which all members shall be summoned, to be held as necessary.

The machinery by which a Society is carried on is, of course, irrelevant to the question at present at issue. Clause 2 in the above Constitution is the item of importance.

We should be glad to be informed what Societies are now working or pledge themselves to work on this financial basis. On the result of this enquiry will depend our ability to approach individual authors on the matter.

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